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GENERAL

1. Pravda outlines plan for five-power discussion of Korea and Indochina:

Pravda on 16 February outlined a plan for a five-power conference on Korea, Indochina and "other urgent matters" to which "other interested countries" could be invited to discuss specific issues. North Korea, South Korea and "other countries concerned" should participate in the discussion of the Korean question, Pravda said, and "representatives of the respective areas" could be invited to consider "the question of restoring peace in other parts of Asia."

This article apparently was designed to show the USSR's willingness to make concessions in order to secure a five-power conference. It attempts to create the impression that Moscow would accept an agenda restricted chiefly to Asian questions. There is no suggestion, however, that the USSR will go further and compromise in its fundamental demand that Communist China be accorded equal status with the other four great powers.

The article was focused primarily on the Indochina question and charged that American propagandists were distorting accounts of the restricted meetings at the Berlin conference in order to deceive the French people, who urgently desire peace in Indochina.

The Communist tactics on Indochina apparently are to maintain military pressure on Franco-Vietnamese forces while holding out hopes to the French for a settlement through a five-power conference with the aid of Peiping. [REDACTED]

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

25X1A 4. Ambassador Heath sees alarm over Indochina as unwarranted:



Ambassador Heath in Saigon believes that an alarmist view of the Indochina situation is unwarranted. He states that the increasing French advantage

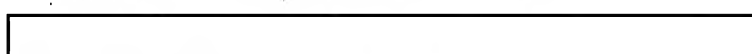
in military manpower during the past year is being obscured by the current dispersal of troops throughout Indochina and believes that General Navarre's plan for breaking Viet Minh resistance within 15 months can be realized.

He observes, however, that Navarre is worried by the Vietnamese army's lack of fighting spirit and efficiency, which forces him to assign all difficult tasks to French and colonial units. Other matters of concern are that Navarre may be restrained by Paris from taking the chances necessary for a successful operation, and the defeatist attitude of some Paris military chiefs.

Comment: The development of an effective Vietnamese army, as much dependent on the political climate in Indochina and French concessions of military responsibility as on adequate training, appears far from realization. With the military initiative in Viet Minh hands, forcing the French to expend their forces in a primarily defensive role, there likewise appears to be no early prospect of consolidating and directing French Union strength against major enemy concentrations.

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25X1A 5. Philippine president aware of difficulties with party leaders:



President Magsaysay is now fully aware of the difficulties presented by the strongly nationalist group within his own party, whose spokesman is Senator Recto. Magsaysay considered firing Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Guerrero, a Recto protégé, after he recently made a much publicized "Asia for Asians" speech, but decided not to risk breaking with such an important faction of his party.

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Comment: The two top Nacionalista party stalwarts, Senators Recto and Laurel, were largely responsible for getting Magsaysay the nomination, but their views have little in common with the progressive platform on which he based his campaign.

In making many of his key appointments, however, Magsaysay willingly accepted their advice on the grounds of their greater political experience. He will probably find it increasingly difficult to overcome obstructionism by his executives in his attempts to institute badly needed reforms.

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WESTERN EUROPE

8. Pleven reportedly lacks authority to "deal with" United States on Indochina:

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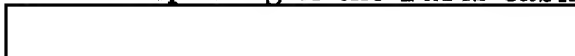
French defense minister Pleven, now in Indochina, is acting under direct instructions from Premier Laniel and has no authority to "deal with the United States"

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before reporting to the Paris cabinet,



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The American embassy in Paris believes that the restrictions on Pleven's activity reflect the "suspicions" within the French cabinet, which is reluctant to have any minister discuss Indochina "except within the limits of a previously approved position."

Comment: The split in the French cabinet over Indochina policy has been apparent since last October. Laniel reportedly reprimanded Secretary of State for the Associated States Jacquet when he publicly discussed the "offer" of Ho Chi Minh last November without prior cabinet approval.

Pleven has been reluctant to increase the military effort in Indochina because of its effect on the build-up of French forces in Europe.

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9. Heuss may delay approval of EDC:

President Heuss will not sign the Bonn and Paris treaties until the Western occupation powers either approve the constitutional amendment authorizing rearmament which the Bundestag is expected to pass in early March, or state that their approval is unnecessary.

Ambassador Conant believes the latter course may be impossible, since the proposed amendment is generally regarded as "new material" rather than as "clarification" of the existing constitution. Approval of the amendment would be accompanied by notice that the Allies do not thereby waive the power they retain over armament, and that the amendment must be implemented only within the framework of EDC.

Conant doubts that the French high commissioner will agree to either course unless a tripartite understanding is reached at the highest level.

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LATIN AMERICA

10. Outlawed Venezuelan party may attempt revolution during Caracas conference:

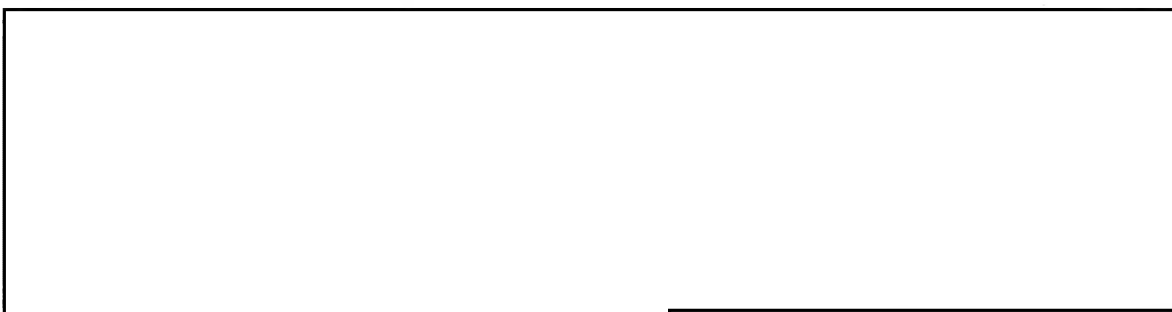
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The outlawed Venezuelan Democratic Action Party (AD) may be planning a revolution in the western oil city of

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Maracaibo next month,

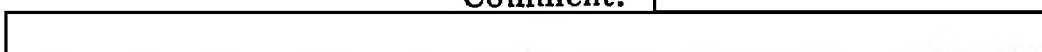


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Comment:



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The party has been plotting to regain power ever since it was overthrown in 1948 but is not believed to be sufficiently recovered from the government's campaign of suppression to stage a successful revolt. There may be disturbances, however, fomented by the AD or either of two other disaffected groups.

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